

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-05 EB-07

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INFO JCS WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

CINCPACFLT MAKALAPA HI

CINCPACAF HICKAM AFB HI

CINCSAC OFFUTT AFB NEBR

MAC SCOTT AFB ILL

13AF/CC CLARK AFB PI

COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK TH

635 AEROS/CC UTAPAO RTNAF TH

99SRS UTAPAO RTNAF TH

7RRFS RAMASUN TH

618 MASS UTAPAO RTNAF TH

FASU UTAPAO RTNAF TH

ISLAND COMMANDER DIEGO GARCIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 4415

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, MARR, TH

SUBJECT: FLIGHT OPERATIONS AT UTAPAO

SUMMARY: UPCOMING EVENTS IN THAILAND MIGHT REQUIRE THE TEMPORARY CURTAILMENT OR COMPLETE SUSPENSION OF FLIGHT OPERATIONS BY U.S. MILITARY AIRCRAFT TO, FROM OR AT UTAPAO ROYAL THAI NAVAL AIR FACILITY. CONTINGENCY PLANNING SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN NOW IN THE EVENT THAT SUCH CURTAILMENT OR SUSPENSION PROVES NECESSARY. END SUMMARY

1. MARCH 20, 1976 IS THE DATE WHEN, IN RESPONSE TO ROYAL
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THAI GOVERNMENT POLICY, ALL U.S. COMBAT FORCES ARE TO HAVE

BEEN WITHDRAWN FROM THAILAND. ALTHOUGH A RESIDUAL NON-COMBAT U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE WILL REMAIN AFTER THAT DATE, THIS HAS NOT BEEN FULLY ACCEPTED BY THE PUBLIC HERE. STUDENT GROUPS IN PARTICULAR, ABETTED BY SOME ELEMENTS OF THE PRESS, ARE OPPOSED TO THIS RESIDUAL PRESENCE. THEY ARE INTRODUCING IT AS AN ISSUE IN THE CURRENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN AND ORGANIZING TO DEMONSTRATE AGAINST IT. IT MUST BE EXPECTED THAT ON MARCH 20 THESE GROUPS AND THE PRESS WILL MOUNT ACTIVE EFFORTS TO FIND OUT WHAT PRESENCE REMAINS. THESE EFFORTS WILL INCLUDE VISITS TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF INSTALLATIONS TO CARRY OUT VISUAL OBSERVATION.

2. ALTHOUGH THERE IS OBVIOUSLY NO WAY TOTALLY TO CONCEAL THE REMAINING U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN THAILAND, NOR WOULD THIS BE DESIRABLE, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE RESIDUAL PRESENCE APPEAR AS SMALL AND MODEST AS POSSIBLE. WE SHOULD IN PARTICULAR DEEMPHASIZE THE VISIBILITY OF THOSE ACTIVITIES THAT ARE MOST DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN IN TERMS OF THEIR VALUE TO THAILAND. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM AREA IN THAT SENSE WILL BE U.S. AIR OPERATIONS INVOLVING UTAPAO RTNAF.

3. TWO PERIODS CAN BE FORESEEN DURING WHICH CRITICS OF THE REMAINING U.S. PRESENCE ARE LIKELY TO BE MOST ACTIVE: AROUND MARCH 20, THE WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE, AND APRIL 4, THE DATE OF THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS. IT WOULD BE ADVISABLE TO AVOID AIR OPERATIONS AROUND THOSE DATES. THE EMBASSY IS CONSIDERING RECOMMENDING THAT FLIGHTS INTO AND OUT OF UTAPAO AND LOCAL FLIGHTS BY U.S. MILITARY AIRCRAFT BE REDUCED TO THE ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL MINIMUM OR COMPLETELY SUSPENDED, BEGINNING MARCH 19 AND APRIL 3 FOR PERIODS OF THREE OR FOUR DAYS EACH. THE SAME GENERAL PRINCIPLE APPLIES AT DON MUANG, TO WHICH TRAFFIC SHOULD THEREFORE NOT RPT NOT BE DIVERTED FROM UTAPAO.

4. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE FLIGHT SCHEDULES OF MANY OF THE AIRCRAFT DEPEND UPON ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS OUTSIDE THAILAND AND BEYOND U.S. CONTROL, AND THAT SCHEDULING AROUND THE TIME PERIODS MENTIONED IN PARAGRAPH 3, ABOVE, CONFIDENTIAL

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MIGHT NOT BE SIMPLE. NONETHELESS, IN THE INTEREST OF FUTURE FLIGHT OPERATIONS INVOLVING THAILAND, AND FOR THAT MATTER IN THE INTEREST OF THE ENTIRE U.S. RESIDUAL PRESENCE HERE, WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT INCONVENIENCE OR EVEN TEMPORARY DEGRADATION OF MISSIONS. IT IS THEREFORE RECOMMENDED THAT U.S. COMMANDS CONDUCTING FLIGHT OPERATIONS IN OR INVOLVING THAILAND PREPARE PLANS NOW, SO THAT THEY WILL BE PREPARED TO RESPOND IMMEDIATELY

IF WE FIND IT NECESSARY TO REQUEST CURTAILMENT OR SUSPENSION.

5. IN ADDITION TO THE CURTAILMENT OR SUSPENSION OF FLIGHT OPERATIONS, IT WOULD ALSO BE DESIRABLE IF THE SMALLEST POSSIBLE NUMBER OF U.S. MILITARY AND NAVAL AIRCRAFT BE PHYSICALLY PRESENT IN THAILAND DURING THE SAME PERIODS OF TIME. CONTINGENCY PLANNING SHOULD ALSO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THIS.

6. INFO ADDRESSEES ARE INVITED TO PROVIDE ANY COMMENTS OR INFORMATION ON PARTICULAR PROBLEMS THESE ACTIONS MIGHT RAISE FOR THEM, SO THAT WE CAN CONSIDER THEM IN MAKING OUR SUBSEQUENT RECOMMENDATIONS.
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